

money to fund the movement's activity, and because of Israel's actions against the internal leadership.

The External Leadership

The structure of the movement is hierarchic: at the top of the pyramid are two bodies that operate outside the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: the Consultative Council (*Majlis a-Shura*) and the Political Bureaus (*al-Maktab al-Siyasi*). The Consultative Council is subordinate to the world leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. It is intended to serve as a supreme religious authority, and its principal role is to grant religious backing and moral justification to the activities of Hamas.⁴⁷ The Political Bureau is the main decision making body, and it is responsible for the movement's foreign relations, fund raising, information policy and direction of military activity. The establishment of the Political Bureau was instigated by Dr. Mousa Abu Marzook in 1989, and it is he who headed it until his arrest in the United States in 1995. His place was taken in 1996 by Khaled Mashal, who has served since then as chairman of the Political Bureau. Up until 1999 Mashal lived in Jordan, but in that year he was expelled from there and moved his base to Damascus. Over the years the external leadership has been characterized by a more militant approach and less willingness to come to understandings with the Palestinian Authority than that shown by the internal leadership.

The Internal Leadership

This leadership has three key centers: in the Gaza Strip, in the West Bank and in the prisons in Israel: Up to March 2004, it was headed by the movement's founder and spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. Over the years, the status of the internal leadership, relative to that outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has been determined to a large extent based on the location of Sheikh Yassin, who was considered the movement's supreme source of authority. When he was imprisoned in Israel (1989-1997) the status of the external leadership grew, while following his release from Israeli prison in 1997, the importance of the internal leadership rose once again. Since his assassination by Israel (March 2004), the external leadership, operating from Damascus, has been the senior authority in the movement, both in theory and in practice.

⁴⁷ According to Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, officially the decisions of the Council were based on the vote of the majority, but in fact it does not operate as a collective body, and questions that come up for discussion are referred to a member of the Council, who gives his own opinion. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, p. 223.

Main Entities⁴⁸

Military Operations Apparatus

The movement's military apparatus was initially based on a nucleus of Islamic Holy Warriors (*al-Mujahiddun al-Islamiyyun*), an entity that had already been established by Sheikh Yassin during the first half of the 1980s, as the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip. In 1992 the **Izz-a-Din al-Qassam Brigades**⁴⁹ were established, military cells that operate on a regional basis and are directly subordinate to the movement's Political Bureau. The bulk of its powerbase is in the Gaza Strip.

The Security Apparatus

The security apparatus, which is known as *al-Majad* (Majad: initials of *Majmuat jihad waDawa – jihad* and Exhortation Cells; *majad* in Arabic means glory), was established in 1986 as part of the al-Mujamma al-Islamiyah, and its principal role is to impose on the Palestinian population a lifestyle that is in keeping with Islamic law. During the First Intifada, its functions were expanded so as to include the execution of Palestinians who were suspected of collaboration with Israel.⁵⁰

The Dawa Apparatus

Hamas is a popular-religious movement, and as part of its communal activity, it runs an extensive network of religious, educational, medical, and welfare institutions. The movement has thus created an alternative system of services to the official one that the state is supposed to provide.⁵¹ This activity is done through the Dawa apparatus, which is responsible for "ideological outreach", that is, bringing believers back to the bosom of Islam through education, religious preaching, social recruitment and community activity.⁵² Among other things, Dawa activity takes the form of running a system of educational institutions that is focused upon the mosques and includes kindergartens and schools, libraries, youth and sporting clubs, the provision of education to adults and vocational courses for women.⁵³ The Dawa activity also includes, in accordance with that which has been set forth above, the provision of health, welfare

⁴⁸ This chapter does not presume to present a comprehensive picture of the Hamas movement's structure, with all its divisions. For diagrams detailing the movement's structure, see Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, p. 283; Yaakov Habakkuk and Salah Shakib, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁹ Izz-a-Din al-Qassam (1871-1935) is considered the father of the Arab armed struggle in Palestine. He is buried in Nesher, near Haifa.

⁵⁰ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, p. 215.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.8

⁵² The literal meaning of the word "Dawa" is invitation or call (to belief in Allah). According to Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, the practical tradition of the Muslim Brotherhood turned the Dawa into a code word for social and cultural action, at the center of which was Islamic education and social welfare for the needy. Ibid, pp. 40 and 241.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 10.

and charity services, such as the distribution of food and clothing to needy families, medical care for the needy at a nominal price or for free, and support for the families of martyrs and those detained in Israeli prisons. The Dawa activity broadens the basis for public support for the Hamas movement.

Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela claim that the Hamas movement's acts of terrorism "are not the essence, from their point of view, and are peripheral in comparison to [that] community activity – open, extensive, intensive and ongoing – that it conducts among the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip areas."⁵⁴ By way of contrast, Israeli security sources emphasize the close connection between the community activity and the terrorist activity carried out by Hamas. According to them, the Dawa apparatus serves not only to give financial support to the families of the fallen and the detainees, but also as a pipeline for the transfer of funds from Islamic charitable organizations to fund terrorist activity itself. Similarly, they point out that the various institutions funded by the Dawa apparatus educate to the values of *jihad* (holy war against those who reject Allah) and *istashhad* (death in *jihad*), and make it easier to recruit new operatives to carry out terrorist attacks.⁵⁵

Support and Funding

The movement receives large-scale financial aid from private donors and from Islamic organizations in various countries. According to security sources in Israel, "many tens of millions of dollars per year" are transferred to Hamas, mainly from foundations and organizations in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, and from "charitable foundations" operating in Western Europe.⁵⁶ Those sources further emphasize that Syria is the main arena of the movement's activity, and it allows its leadership to conduct its political, military and financial activities from within its territory.⁵⁷ Further aid for Hamas also comes from Iran and from Hezbollah.

In the wake of the fatal terrorist attack carried out by Hamas on the No. 2 bus in Jerusalem on August 19, 2003, the United States froze monies in four of the movement's fundraising bodies

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 9. In a report by Felix Frish, published on Ynet on July 29, 2003, it is also argued that the terrorist activity withdraws only a small portion of the organization's budget, and the bulk is directed to the Dawa activities. See <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-2710673,00.html>

⁵⁵ See the official Israel Defense Forces website:

<http://www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=HE&docid=25934&Pos=1&bScop>, Intelligence Branch / Research Division, **Characterization of the Nature and Terrorist Activity of Hamas**, document dated August 28, 2003, also published on the website of the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center <http://www.intelligence.org.il/sp/default.htm>

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 2. In the Ynet report of July 29, 2003, it was claimed, based on a senior defense source, that "60% of the Hamas budget – 12 to 14 million dollars annually – comes from Saudi contributors and organizations." See <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-2710673,00.html>

⁵⁷ Intelligence Branch / Research Division, **Characterization of the Nature and Terrorist Activity of Hamas**, p. 4.

located in Europe and Lebanon. The United States also declared six senior members of the Hamas leadership as terrorists whose assets were to be frozen. The United States was joined by the countries of the European Union. They placed all the arms of Hamas on the list of terrorist organizations, and thus froze the organization's funds. Hamas's financial assets were also frozen in Canada, Japan, Norway and Australia. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Saudi Arabia has taken certain steps against funding for Hamas, and the Central Bank of Kuwait has also instructed banks in that country to freeze a number of the movement's accounts.⁵⁸ At the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, Israel froze the funds of charitable associations associated with Hamas, and this was also done by the Palestinian Authority. In April 2004, because of the financial difficulties caused to Hamas as a result of these pressures, the movement conducted a "fundraising campaign" among the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip.⁵⁹

Milestones in the Organization's History

- 1989 The kidnapping and murder by Hamas of soldiers Avi Sasportas (on February 16) and Ilan Saadon (on May 3); Israel arrested Sheikh Yassin and additional operatives. These arrests led to a reorganization of the movement on a hierarchical basis, and to the end of the era of an exclusively internal leadership.

- 1992 Signing of a draft agreement to set up a political and military alliance between Iran and Hamas. On December 13, Hamas murdered soldier Nissim Toledano. That same month, Israel arrested 1,600 operatives and supporters of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and expelled 415 of them to Lebanon. In Lebanon they took part in training and military exercises at Hezbollah camps.

- 1993 As a result of the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO, Hamas intensified its terrorist activity against Israel. On April 16 it carried out the first Palestinian suicide terrorist attack in Israel – the detonation of a car bomb, driven by a suicide terrorist, between two buses parked near Mecholah Junction (2 killed and 5 wounded).

- October 1994 The kidnapping and murder of soldier Nachshon Wachsman; a suicide terrorist attack on bus No. 5 in Tel Aviv, in which 22 people were killed. From 1994 to 2000, Hamas carried out 16 suicide terrorist attacks.

- 1996 In March-April the organization carried out three suicide terrorist attacks, in which 56 people were killed (two terrorist attacks on No. 18 buses in Jerusalem

⁵⁸ Document dated January 1, 2004, dealing with the funding of terrorism and published on the official Israel Defense Forces website: <http://www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=HE&docid=25934&Pos=1&bScop>

⁵⁹ Intelligence Branch / Research Division document dated April 20, 2004, Reference 688/0037.

and a terrorist attack at Ashkelon Junction). Hamas claimed that the terrorist attacks were in response to the elimination of the "Engineer," Yahya Ayyash, that year. The State Department of the United States added Hamas to its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

- 1997 In the aftermath of the failed assassination attempt on Khaled Mashal in Jordan, Israel released Sheikh Yassin from prison.
- 1998 In May-June Yassin made a trip to Iran, Sudan, Syria and the Gulf states, and reportedly was able to raise funds totaling tens of millions of dollars.
- 2004 On March 22, Israel assassinated Sheikh Yassin in a missile attack on his vehicle, when he was leaving a mosque in Gaza. His place at the head of the internal leadership was taken by Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Less than a month later, he was also assassinated by Israel.

The Organization's Activity in the Present Conflict

During the present conflict, Hamas has caused more losses on the Israeli side than any other organization. The organization is responsible for 18% of all terrorist attacks, and for 46% of all Israeli fatalities.⁶⁰ Most of the victims were killed in suicide terrorist attack carried out by the organization, among them:

- A suicide terrorist attack at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv on June 1, 2001 (21 killed and 120 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack at the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem on August 9, 2001 (21 killed and 110 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack on a bus in Haifa on December 2, 2001 (15 killed and 60 wounded);
- Terrorist attacks carried out by the Silwan Cell (four residents of East Jerusalem operated by Hamas), among them the suicide terrorist attacks at Moment Café in Jerusalem

⁶⁰ These data are taken from the website of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (<http://www.ict.org.il>). According to this source, from late September 2000 to early June 2004, 367 people were killed and 1,995 people were wounded in 61 terrorist attacks carried out by the organization (the data does not include guerilla attacks against military targets, and includes only those incidents in which there was at least one victim). According to another source – the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center (http://www.intelligence.org.il/sp/c_t/s_report/mar_f_04.htm) – between September 2000 and March 2004, Hamas carried out about 780 terrorist attacks, in which about 430 people were killed (this calculation also includes terrorist attacks without victims and actions directed against military targets).

(March 9, 2002) and at the Sheffield Club in Rishon Lezion (May 7, 2002), and the placing of the explosive device in the cafeteria of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (July 31, 2002). In these terrorist attacks, 35 people were killed and 210 wounded;

- A suicide terrorist attack at the Park Hotel in Netanya on [Passover] Seder night 5762, March 27, 2002 (30 killed and 150 wounded). As a result of this terrorist attack, the Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Defensive Shield;
- A suicide terrorist attack at the Matza restaurant in Haifa on March 31, 2002 (15 killed and 30 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack on a bus at Pat Junction in Jerusalem on June 18, 2002 (19 killed and 52 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack on a bus in Haifa on March 5, 2003 (17 killed and 40 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack on a bus in Jaffa Road, Jerusalem, on June 11, 2003 (17 killed and 50 wounded);
- A suicide terrorist attack on a No. 2 bus in Jerusalem on August 19, 2003 (24 killed and 102 wounded).



The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

The Organization's Establishment

Since the late 1970s, a number of organizations and factions with the name "Islamic Jihad" have operated in the Palestinian arena. Some of them also joined, in one form or another, the Fatah movement.⁶¹ Over the years the organization that became the most dominant among all those factions is the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, identified with Fathi Shaqaqi.

The organization was established in Gaza in 1981 by Dr. Fathi Abdel Aziz Shaqaqi, a doctor from Rafiah, and Sheikh Abdel Aziz Odeh, a religious preacher from the Jabalia Refugee Camp. The two of them headed a group of Palestinian students who were studying in the mid-1970s at Zagazig University in Egypt, and were influenced by the success of the Iranian Revolution (1979) and by the radicalization of the local Islamic student organizations. Dr. Ramadan Shalah, the present secretary of the organization, was also a member of its founding nucleus.

Ideology

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad was the first major Palestinian organization that placed *jihad* at the center of the Palestinian national struggle, and offered an Islamic-religious ideological alternative to the secular-nationalism of Fatah and the leftist organizations. There are those who

⁶¹ Elements within Fatah were concerned about the rising power of Muslim religious functionaries, and sought to moderate their influence by establishing an Islamic arm within Fatah. In the 1980s, two groups called Islamic Jihad were set up within Fatah, and both of them were operated by Fatah's military commander, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad). In late 1987, Abu Jihad established a framework for channeling the activity of members of the religious sector in the West Bank, within the Fatah framework, and at its head stood Sheikh Assad Bayud al-Tamimi, the Imam of the al-Aqsa Mosque, who headed a faction of the "Temple Islamic Jihad." See: Anat Koretz, Maskit Burgin and David Tal, **Islamic Terrorism and Israel: Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas**, Anat Koretz (ed.), Papyrus, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, 5753 [=1993], pp. 125-129.

see it as the most radical terrorist organization operating in the Palestinian arena.⁶² The organization sees Palestine as the heart of the religious-historical conflict between Muslims and Jews, and the center of Western imperialism seeking to take control of the Muslim lands. According to its approach, the Palestinian question is not only a national issue but also, in essence, an Islamic issue, and its solution is the key “to the liberation and unification of the whole of the Islamic nation.”⁶³ According to Meir Litvak, herein lies the ideological innovation that the Palestinian Islamic Jihad brought with it: a commitment to two intertwined goals – the liberation of Palestine (which can be brought about solely through *jihad*) and pan-Islamic revival.⁶⁴ The organization’s founders, who grew up from within the Muslim Brotherhood movement, rejected the fundamental approach of that movement toward the Palestinian question, according to which it is first necessary to instill the principles of Islam within Arab society, and only thereafter – with the achievement of Islamic unity – will it be possible to defeat Israel. Against this approach, the founders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad argued that the liberation of Palestine has to precede education toward Islam, since Israel, by its very existence, is the source of moral and spiritual corruption, and it is this that prevents Muslims from curing the ills of their society.⁶⁵ Therefore, *jihad* directed at the elimination of the “Zionist entity” is the obligation of individuals – the vanguard leading the camp (“revolutionary vanguard”) – and the fulfillment of this obligation cannot be postponed until after the establishment of the Islamic state.

This ideology was influenced, to a large extent, by the Islamic revolution that had taken place in Iran. This aspect, too, brings with it another innovation in the conception of the organization’s founders. The admiration demonstrated by the founders – all of them Sunni Muslims – toward the Shiite Iranian revolution and its leader, Khomeini, was an anomaly in the Arab world, and particularly in the Sunni movements that operated in it in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Shafaqi and his associates saw that revolution as a model to be emulated, and even adopted the Shiite concept that guided it, the idea of acceptance of the political authority of religious leaders. Shafaqi was also the first person in the Sunni Arab world to write, in March 1979, a book which is throughout a paean of praise to the Iranian revolution in general and to Khomeini in particular.⁶⁶

⁶² This is how Meir Litvak defines it in his article, “The Palestinian Islamic Jihad: Background Information,” The article was published on November 28, 2002, on the websites of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, operating at Tel Aviv University: <http://www.dayan.org/> www.tau.ac.il/jcss/ The article was republished on February 26, 2003, on the website of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (<http://www.ict.org.il>).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ The authorities in Cairo banned publication of the book in Egypt. The connection between the organization and Iran is also attested to in a statement by the organization’s secretary, Dr. Ramadan Shalah, on May 22, 2002: “The Palestinian Islamic Jihad is a fruit of the richly fruitful tree of the leader, Khomeini.” See documents of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad published on the ICT website (<http://www.ict.org.il/organizations/orgdet.cfm?orgid=28>)

The Organization's Structure and Leadership

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad has two leaderships. The more senior of them resides for the most part in Syria and Lebanon. At its head is the organization's secretary, Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Shalah, who is located in Damascus. Additional branches of the organization operate in Beirut, Teheran and Khartoum. The internal leadership is headed by Dr. Mohamed al-Hindi and Abdullah al-Shani, who live in Gaza. The al-Quds Brigades are the organization's military wing.

Support and Funding

As mentioned, Syria allows the organization's headquarters to operate within its territory and in Lebanon, and from there to direct its terrorist activity. Iran is considered the organization's principal patron, and is its principal source of funding.⁶⁷ Hezbollah provides the Palestinian Islamic Jihad with training bases and logistical assistance, and serves as pipeline for the transfer of Iranian aid to it.

Milestones in the Organization's History

- 1986-1987 The Palestinian Islamic Jihad is the leading entity in violent activity against Israel in these years and played a key role in initiating the First Intifada.

- April 1988 The leaders of the organization, chief among them Fathi Shaqaqi and Abdel Aziz Odeh, were expelled by Israel to Lebanon. From there they strengthened their ties with Iran and with Hezbollah.

- December 1992 Israel arrested 1,600 operatives and supporters of Hamas and the Palestine Islam Jihad, and expelled 415 of them to Lebanon. There they participated in training and military exercises at Hezbollah bases. In 1992-1994, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah carried out joint operations against the Israel Defense Forces and South Lebanon Army forces in Southern Lebanon.

- 1995-1996 In the wake of the signing of the Oslo Accords, the organization began a series of suicide terrorist attacks, with the aim of torpedoing the political process between Israel and the Palestinians. Among the terrorist attacks carried out in this period were the detonation of car bombs at Beit Lid on January 22, 1995 (a terrorist attack carried out in cooperation with Hamas, in which 21 people were killed and 69 wounded), and the terrorist attack in Kfar Darom on April 9, 1995 (8 killed and

and the Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center
(http://www.intelligence.org.il/sp/sib_10_03/sib_10_19.htm)

⁶⁷ Website of the Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center's website:
http://www.intelligence.org.il/sp/sib_10_03/sib_10_19.htm

50 wounded). On October 26, 1995, in Malta, the then leader of the organization, Shaqqaqi, was assassinated (according to foreign press reports, his killing was carried out by the Israeli Mossad). His place as head of the movement's leadership passed to Dr. Ramadan Shalah. On March 4, 1996, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad carried out a suicide terrorist attack adjacent to the Dizengoff Center in Tel Aviv (13 killed and 75 wounded). From 1994 to October 1, 2000, the organization carried out eight suicide terrorist attacks.

The Organization's Activity in the Present Conflict

During the present conflict, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad was responsible for about 14% of all the terrorist attacks and fatalities on the Israeli side.⁶⁸ The majority of victims were killed in suicide terrorist attacks carried out by the organization, among them:

- A suicide terrorist in a car bomb detonated himself alongside a bus at Megiddo Junction on June 5, 2002 (17 killed and 50 wounded);
- Two terrorists in a car bomb blew up alongside a bus at Karkur Junction on October 21, 2002 (14 killed, 45 wounded);
- A female suicide terrorist blew herself up at Maxim Restaurant in Haifa on October 4, 2003 (21 killed, 60 wounded).

Hamas in Comparison with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

Both Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad were established during the 1980s, and they raised the banner of an ideology that combined Islamic fervor and Palestinian nationalism. Both of them see the Palestinian question as a religious issue which has no solution other than the elimination of the "Zionist entity" through *jihad* and establishment of an Islamic-law state on its ruins. Thus, both of them rejected the Oslo Accords (they saw them as a betrayal of the sacred rights of the Palestinians and the Muslims) and began a terror offensive against Israel, sometimes in cooperation with one another (particularly in the present conflict). Nonetheless, there are some differences between these two organizations:

- Hamas is a large scale mass movement, which over the years has acquired a strong foothold within all walks of Palestinian society, and has become the principal social and political opposition to the Fatah movement. By contrast, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad is

⁶⁸ These data are taken from the website of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (<http://www.ict.org.il>). According to this source, from late September 2000 to early June 2004, 110 people were killed and 811 people were wounded in 44 terrorist attacks carried out by the organization (the data does not include guerilla attacks against military targets, and includes only those incidents in which there was at least one victim).

essentially an organization rather than a popular movement. Like Hamas, it too ran associations operating in the fields of welfare, health and Islamic education, but its civilian infrastructure is much smaller than that of Hamas.⁶⁹ The Palestinian Islamic Jihad remains a rather small organization, and it is estimated that the extent of its support among the Palestinian population does not exceed 4%-5%.⁷⁰

- Both the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, but the attitude of the two to the parent movement differs: the Hamas movement has maintained close ties to it and sees itself as “one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine.”⁷¹ By contrast, the founders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in effect withdrew from the Muslim Brotherhood, and have been openly critical of its approach to the Palestinian question and its solution.
- While Hamas always maintained its identity as an independent Palestinian movement, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad is identified with Iran more than any other Palestinian organization, and over the years has developed a significant dependence on the Iranian regime from an ideological, operational and financial point of view.

⁶⁹ From the Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia website, <http://he.wikipedia.org>.

⁷⁰ Meir Litvak, “The Palestinian Islamic Jihad: Background Information,” p. 2. This evaluation is also shared by Moshe Marzuk, a researcher at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), based on a conversation with him on June 13, 2004.

⁷¹ Section 2 in the Hamas Charter.

Non-Palestinian Organizations



Hezbollah

The Organization's Name

The meaning of the name Hezbollah is "God's Party." The name is taken from a verse in the Quran that states: "Those who are the party of God are the victors."⁷²

General Characteristics

Hezbollah is an umbrella organization that unifies within it radical Shiite organization, groups and religious figures who have adopted the Khomeinist worldview.⁷³ It is not just a terrorist organization, but also an Islamic-Lebanese movement operating in a number of spheres: as a social movement it conducts intensive activity in the fields of education, health, housing and so on; as a political party it participates in local and national elections, and is represented in the Lebanese parliament. In addition, it maintains an armed military militia – the only military body whose existence is allowed outside the framework of the Lebanese Army. From a military operational point of view, the organization functions both in the Lebanese and Palestinian arena, and in the international arena, and is based on an extensive infrastructure of collaborators, supporters and "sleepers cells" throughout the world, particularly in Shiite communities.

⁷² Beni Kalvari, **Hezbollah: The Party of God**. A "Know the Middle East" Booklet (edited by Haim Opaz) prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Information Center / Publications Service, p 1.

⁷³ Shaul Shai, **Terrorism in the Name of the Imam: 20 Years of Shiite Terrorism**, p. 55.

The Organization's Establishment

The Hezbollah movement was founded in the second half of 1982 in Baalbek, in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Its founders were Shiite clerics, graduates of religious colleges in the holy cities of Najaf in Iraq and Qom in Iran, who had returned to Lebanon at the end of the 1970s and founded Shiite religious colleges in their own country. Among the organization's founders were Abbas Musawi and Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. During 1982, additional Shiite organizations, such as the Union of Muslim Students, the Muslim Ulema Association in Lebanon, and the al-Dawa organization, joined the ranks of Hezbollah. The Hezbollah movement was established under the inspiration of Iran, and with the direct assistance of members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, sent to the Bekaa Valley region in Lebanon as part of the efforts by the Khomeini regime to "export" the Islamic Revolution.

Ideology

Hezbollah's ideology is based on the principles of Iran's Islamic Revolution, central to which is the demand for activism through violent struggle (*jihad*) in order to "overthrow the oppressor."⁷⁴ According to this ideology, the movement's goal is to establish in Lebanon an Islamic republic, based on *Shari'a* (Islamic religious law), which will be an integral part of an Islamic supra-national state. At the same time, Hezbollah recognized the fact that it did not have ability to impose such a regime on Lebanon, and so this principle remains a long-term strategic goal.⁷⁵ Other goals that the organization has espoused are the battle against "Western imperialism" in Lebanon and an uncompromising struggle against the State of Israel. This struggle was not limited to removing [Israel] from Lebanon, but is intended, according to declaration by the organization's leaders, to bring about its elimination and to impose Islamic rule in Jerusalem. In this context, the organization's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, declared:

"At the beginning of the third millennium, we state publicly, with our voices and with our blood and with full force, [that] we do not recognize the existence of a state called Israel. Even if the whole world were to recognize it, Israel will always be the enemy... Israel is an oppressive, cancerous identity, lacking any legitimacy; it was founded on exploitative terror, injustice, oppression, and exile of people and constant slaughter. Israel will not become legitimate as a result of signing agreements or contracts. No one on earth has the right to hand over a single

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 57. In this context, the movement's platform, published in 1985, states: "Although Hezbollah is committed to Islam, it will not impose it on Lebanon by force... If our people will be given the opportunity to freely choose the system of government in Lebanon, they will prefer Islam. Hence we call for the adoption of the Islamic way on the basis of a free, sincere choice by the people, not on the basis of coercion by force." Quoted by Shimon Shapira, *Hezbollah: Between Iran and Lebanon*, p. 128.

grain of the soil of the land of Palestine to the Israeli oppressor” (from a speech broadcast on the organization’s television station, Al-Manar, on January 1, 2000).⁷⁶

The Organization’s Structure and Leadership

The movement’s leadership is in the hands of religious scholars. Hezbollah viewed Ayatollah Khomeini as its supreme leader, and its leaders in Lebanon were appointed in line with his rulings. This principle, of an external source of authority, was also maintained following Khomeini’s death (June 1989), when his successor, Ali Khamenei, was recognized as the supreme leader of the movement. In Lebanon itself the movement is administered by a hierarchy of local councils, subordinate to the Supreme Council (“Consultative Council” – *Majlis Shura al-Karar*). This council has nine members: seven Lebanese Shiite leaders, and two Iranian representatives. It is headed by the organization’s General Secretary, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who has held this position since February 1992. His deputy is Sheikh Naim Qassem. The two of them also head the “Executive Council” (“*Majlis Shura al-Tanfida*”), which is responsible for administering the movement’s affairs in the political and organizational spheres. The organization’s spiritual leader in Lebanon is Sheikh Mohamed Hussein Fadlallah. Hezbollah’s military wing is directly subordinate to the Supreme Council, and is headed by Imad Fayezi Mughniyeh, one of the ten most wanted terrorists by the United States.⁷⁷

Support and Funding

The source of over half of Hezbollah’s budget is from Iran. Iran transfers funds to the organization through the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Foreign Ministry, as well as through quasi-governmental bodies, such as charitable funds operating under the regime’s auspices.⁷⁸ In addition, the organization raises funds in Lebanon and throughout the world, primarily through charitable foundations and societies (similar to those of the Hamas movement) which operate within Shiite Muslim communities. The main centers of these activities outside Lebanon are in the Ivory Coast and in the “Triple Frontier” at the junction of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, but fundraising also takes place in Western Europe and in the United States.⁷⁹ In addition, the organization receives a slice of the Lebanese government’s budget through its party in the

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 212.

⁷⁷ “Hezbollah: The Face of a Worldwide Lebanese Shiite Terrorist Organization operating under Iranian Auspices and with Syrian Support,” document from March 2003 published on the website of the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center http://www.intelligence.org.il/sp/hizbullah/hizb_a.htm. This document presents a detailed diagram of the organization’s structure.

⁷⁸ Ibid. According to this source, Western intelligence sources estimate Hezbollah’s budget at 100 million dollars annually. This budget serves not only to fund the organization’s military activity, but also to fund its social activities (running schools, hospitals, welfare institutions, and so on).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Lebanese Parliament, the “Faithfulness to the Resistance Bloc,” responsible for maintaining and funding various projects in Shiite population centers in the country.

Iran’s role is not limited to financial aid alone, and as mentioned, it is directly involved in directing the organization’s activity on the diplomatic, political, social and military level. Iran is the organization’s principal weapons supplier, and members of its Revolutionary Guards train the organization’s fighters. Syria also plays a key role in connection with providing aid and political and military backing to Hezbollah. Thus, for example, military equipment from Iran passes through it, it supplies [Hezbollah] with weapons of its own manufacture, and in effect it is [Syria] that allows [Hezbollah] to continue to exist as an armed military militia outside the framework of the Lebanese Army.

Milestones in the Organization’s History

- 1983 The organization began a series of suicide terrorist attacks against Israeli and Western targets in Lebanon. The first terrorist attack was carried out on April 18: a commercial vehicle loaded with 400 kilograms of explosive and driven by a suicide terrorist blew up alongside the American Embassy building in Beirut (63 killed and 120 wounded). On October 23, the organization detonated, in parallel, two car bombs in Beirut, one at the United States Marines headquarters (260 killed) and the second at the headquarters of the French forces (58 killed). On November 4, a car bomb blew up at the Israel Defense Forces headquarters in Tyre, causing the deaths of 61 people.⁸⁰

- 1984-1985 The organization kidnapped 12 Lebanese Jews from their homes in Beirut and executed 9 of them. In June 1985 the organization hijacked an aircraft belonging to the American airline TWA to Beirut, and held its passengers hostage for 17 days. From 1982 to June 1989 the organization was responsible for the kidnapping of 55 foreign citizens in Lebanon.

- 1989 Signing of the Taif Agreement, under which the Lebanese militias, apart from Hezbollah, were disarmed; it remained the only movement in Lebanon that operated a military militia. At the Hezbollah Conference that convened in October in Teheran, it was decided to carry out organizational changes in the movement, including the establishment of an open leadership.

- 1992 The General Secretary of the organization, Abbas Musawi, was killed on February 6 in an Israel Air Force attack. Hezbollah responded to this attack with a massive

⁸⁰ The data is taken from Shaul Shai’s book, **Terrorism in the Name of the Imam: 20 Years of Shiite Terrorism**, pp. 72-73.

missile onslaught on northern Israel, lasting six consecutive days. The organization's "retaliatory actions" also extended outside of Lebanon. On March 1, 1992, terrorists sent by Hezbollah attacked worshippers in the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul, wounding one person. One week later, the organization killed a security officer at the Israeli Embassy in Ankara. On March 17 the organization detonated a car bomb in front of the Israeli Embassy building in Buenos Aires (34 killed and 242 wounded). The place of Musawi in the Hezbollah leadership was taken by Hassan Nasrallah. In that year the organization also ran, for the first time, as a political party in the elections for the Lebanese parliament.

1994 On July 18 the organization carried out a further terrorist attack in Argentina – this time the detonation of a car bomb adjacent to the Jewish community building (AMIA) in Buenos Aires. As a result of the explosion, the 7-story building collapsed, with 97 people killed and 230 wounded.

The Organization's Activity since the Israel Defense Forces' Withdrawal from Lebanon

During the Israel Defense Forces' stay in Lebanon (from June 1982 through May 2000), the organization conducted an ongoing guerilla war against the Israel Defense Forces and South Lebanon Army, in addition to its terrorist activity. Even after completion of the Israel Defense Forces' withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah continued its military activity against Israel. Two main arguments were used to justify this: the continued occupation of "Lebanese land" by Israel (the Shebaa farms at the foot of Mount Dov)⁸¹ and the provision of assistance to the "Palestinian *jihad* resistance".

In attacks that the organization carried out on the northern border, since the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, 19 Israelis were killed and 26 wounded; the majority of the fatalities and wounded were soldiers.⁸² These attacks also included the use of Palestinian terrorists against civilian targets in Israel. Thus, for example, on March 12, 2002, the organization carried out, using Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists, a terrorist attack near Kibbutz Matzuva (6 killed and 7 wounded). Other significant operations in this period were the killing and kidnapping to Lebanon of three Israel Defense Forces soldiers (Adi Avitan, Beni Avraham and Omar Sued) and the kidnapping of an Israeli civilian to Beirut (Elhanan Tannenbaum).

The aid that Hezbollah gives to the Palestinian struggle during the present conflict goes beyond the Israel-Lebanon border zone: Hezbollah provides the Palestinian terrorist organization with military aid, including the supply of war materiel, training and instruction, the establishment of

⁸¹ A claim that contradicts the finding of the United Nations Security Council, according to which Israel completed its withdrawal from Lebanon pursuant to UN Resolution 425.

⁸² The data relate to the period between May 2000 through July 2004, inclusive, and are taken from the Israel Defense Forces website: <http://www1.idf.il>

terrorist infrastructure within the West Bank and Gaza, and attempts to enlist Israeli Arabs to carry out terrorist attacks. In addition, the organization transfers funds to Palestinian terrorist organizations, particularly those identified with Fatah (the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades). Similarly, on the information and propaganda level, Hezbollah's media outlets, principally the Al-Manar television station, serve to encourage continuation of the violence.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda (Arabic for “the basis”) is a multinational Islamic organization established in the late 1980s by Osama Bin Laden. The organization advocates worldwide *jihad*. It operates networks of terrorist cells, and supports militant Islamist groups throughout the world, making extensive use of the internet and other advanced technologies. In its view, Israel and the Jews, alongside the United States and the countries of the West, are the primary target for *jihad* war, since they are the spearhead of the “Judeo-Crusader Front against Islam.”⁸³

The organization grew up from the “graduates of Afghanistan” – Muslim fighters who flowed into Afghanistan from across the world to fight alongside the local Mujahedeen against the army of the Soviet Union in the years 1979-1989 (the United States supported them in this war). Following the war they were joined by hundreds of volunteers, the majority of them members of Islamic-Arab terrorist organizations, sent to Afghanistan to train in guerilla warfare and terror.⁸⁴ At the head of the “Afghanistan graduates” camp stood Saudi millionaire Osama Bin Laden.⁸⁵ According to Yoram Shweitzer, Bin Laden’s world view was that “Islam is under attack by foreign, secular forces and by western modernization. According to this perspective the whole world – and particularly the Middle East – are the arena in which a deterministic battle for survival is taking place among the three main religions. In this struggle, a Christian (“Crusader”)-Jewish coalition has been formed, reflected in the alliance between the United States and Israel (and World Jewry), which is occupying Islam’s most holy lands – Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem – and is seeking to subjugate it. This alliance is carrying out – so he claims – a systematic and deliberate massacre of Muslims.”⁸⁶

In 1998, Bin Laden assembled the leaders of a number of Islamic organizations in Afghanistan, and declared the establishment of the “International Islamic Front for *jihad* against the Crusaders and the Jews.” This Front published a religious legal ruling in which those leaders called on all of the world’s Muslims to view the killing of Americans and their allies – civilians and military personnel alike – as a personal obligation in order to liberate the “Sacred Mosque in Mecca” and “the al-Aqsa Mosque.”⁸⁷ Another target of Al-Qaeda’s war is the regimes in Muslim countries, which it perceives as “corrupt apostates,” subject to Western influence. The organization seeks to establish in their place regimes that will function according to Muslim religious law (*Shari’a*).

⁸³ From a conversation held on July 15, 2000, with Mr. Yoram Shweitzer, researcher at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University.

⁸⁴ Yoram Shweitzer, “The Threat to Israel of Bin Laden and the ‘Afghanistan Graduates’”, *Ma’arachot*, 373, p. 38.

⁸⁵ Bin Laden maintains offices, companies and bank accounts in Europe and the Arab world. His personal wealth is estimated at approximately 260,000,000 dollars, and his family’s wealth at 5 billion dollars. See <http://www.knesset.gov.il/library/heb/docs/sif012.htm>.

⁸⁶ Yoram Shweitzer, “The Threat to Israel of Bin Laden and the ‘Afghanistan Graduates’”, p. 39.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

In the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks carried out in the United States by the Al-Qaeda organization, 3,600 people were killed, and this is considered the largest ever terrorist incident in human history. In addition, the organization was involved, among others, in carrying out the following terrorist attacks:

August 1998: Terrorist attacks at the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania;

October 2002: A terrorist attack at a night club on the island of Bali in Indonesia (182 killed and 250 wounded);

March 2004: Terrorist attacks at three railway stations in Madrid (about 200 killed).

As mentioned, the organization also sees Israeli and Jewish targets as a target for terrorist attacks, and this is reflected in terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda and organizations that it supports:

April 2002: A terrorist attack on the old synagogue on the island of Djerba, Tunisia (19 killed and 15 wounded, most of them German tourists);

November 2002: Two coordinated terrorist attacks in Mombasa, Kenya: two missiles were fired at an Israeli passenger aircraft (the missiles missed their target) and an explosion at a hotel housing Israeli tourists (13 killed, including 3 Israelis, and 80 wounded);

November 2003: Detonation of car bombs alongside synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey (27 killed).

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